

Amendments to the claims:

This listing of the claims replaces all prior versions of the claims in the application:

Listing of claims:

1. (currently amended) A medical device comprising:
 - a body having a tapered distal end ~~leading end and a trailing end~~, the ~~leading end~~ of the body ~~being the first end of the body that will be inserted into a patient during a~~ procedure;
 - a lumen extending from a first lumen opening formed in the body to a second lumen opening formed in the body;
 - a first needle guide channel extending from a first needle guide channel opening formed in the body to a second needle guide channel opening formed in the body; and
 - a needle having a leading end and a trailing end, the trailing end of the needle being connected to a length of suture, the leading end of the needle being the first end of the needle that will penetrate tissue during a procedure, the needle being backloaded into the first needle guide channel such that the tapered distal end ~~trailing end~~ of the body is closer to the leading end ~~trailing end~~ of the needle than to the trailing end ~~leading end~~ of the needle, the length of suture being threaded through the lumen such that the needle will be advanced out of the first needle guide channel by pulling on a portion of the length of suture that is unsurrounded by the medical device and positioned outside of the body;
- the medical device being configured such that the first needle guide channel opening and the second needle guide channel opening will be directly exposed to a patient's tissue when the medical device is used during a procedure.

2. (original) The medical device of claim 1, wherein the first needle guide channel is arcuate shaped.
3. (original) The medical device of claim 1, further comprising a handle coupled to the body.
4. (original) The medical device of claim 3, wherein the handle is coupled to the body by a connector piece.
5. (original) The medical device of claim 4, wherein the connector piece is bendable such that it can be fixed in a variety of positions.
6. (original) The medical device of claim 1, wherein a portion of the body is tapered.
7. (original) The medical device of claim 1, further comprising:
one or more additional needle guide channels, each extending from its own first needle guide channel opening formed in the body to its own second needle guide channel opening formed in the body;
wherein each of the one or more additional needle guide channels is configured in operative relation with the lumen such that a needle that is backloaded into any of the one or more additional needle guide channels will be advanced out of the additional needle guide channel by pulling on a length of suture that is connected to the needle and threaded through the lumen.
8. (original) The medical device of claim 7, wherein one of the one or more additional needle guide channels are arcuate shaped.
9. (original) The medical device of claim 7, wherein each of the one or more additional needle guide channels and the first needle guide channel is arcuate shaped.

10. (original) The medical device of claim 7, wherein the first needle guide channel and each of the one or more additional needle guide channels are circumferentially positioned around the body.

11. (original) The medical device of claim 10, wherein the first needle guide channel and each of the one or more additional needle guide channels are equidistant from each other.

12-30. (canceled)

31. (currently amended) A medical device comprising:

a body having a tapered distal end ~~leading end and a trailing end, the leading end of the body being the first end of the body that will be inserted into a patient during a procedure;~~

a lumen extending from a first lumen opening formed in the body to a second lumen opening formed in the body;

a first needle guide channel extending from a first needle guide channel opening formed in the body; and

a needle having a leading end and a trailing end, the trailing end of the needle being connected to a length of suture, the leading end of the needle being the first end of the needle that will penetrate tissue during a procedure, the needle being backloaded into the first needle guide channel such that the tapered distal end ~~trailing end~~ of the body is closer to the leading end ~~trailing end~~ of the needle than to the trailing end ~~leading end~~ of the needle, the length of suture being threaded through the lumen such that when a portion of the length of suture that is unsurrounded by the medical device and positioned outside of the body is pulled in a first direction away from the body, the

needle is advanced out of the first needle guide channel in a second direction, the first direction having a positive longitudinal component and the second direction having a negative longitudinal component.

32. (original) The medical device of claim 31, wherein the first needle guide channel is arcuate shaped.

33. (original) The medical device of claim 31, further comprising a handle coupled to the body.

34. (original) The medical device of claim 33, wherein the handle is coupled to the body by a connector piece.

35. (original) The medical device of claim 34, wherein the connector piece is bendable such that it can be fixed in a variety of positions.

36. (original) The medical device of claim 31, wherein a portion of the body is tapered.

37. (original) The medical device of claim 31, further comprising:

one or more additional needle guide channels, each extending from its own first needle guide channel opening formed in the body;

wherein the lumen and each of the one of more additional needle guide channels are configured in operative relation with each other such that when a length of suture is threaded through the lumen and is connected to a needle that is backloaded into one of the one or more additional needle guide channels, and the length of suture is pulled in a first additional direction, the needle is advanced out of the additional needle guide channel in a second additional direction, the first additional direction having a positive longitudinal component and the second additional direction having a negative longitudinal component.

38. (original) The medical device of claim 37, wherein one of the one or more additional needle guide channels is arcuate shaped.

39. (original) The medical device of claim 37, wherein each of the one or more additional needle guide channels and the first needle guide channel are arcuate shaped.

40. (original) The medical device of claim 37, wherein the first needle guide channel and each of the one or more additional needle guide channels are circumferentially positioned around the body.

41. (original) The medical device of claim 40, wherein the first needle guide channel and each of the one or more additional needle guide channels are equidistant from each other.

42-63. (canceled)

64. (currently amended) A medical device comprising:

a body having a tapered distal end ~~leading end and a trailing end, the leading end of the body being the first end of the body that will be inserted into a patient during a procedure;~~

a lumen extending from a first lumen opening formed in the body to a second lumen opening formed in the body, the lumen being substantially centered within the body;

a first needle guide channel extending from a first needle guide channel opening formed in the body to a second needle guide channel opening formed in the body; and

a needle having a leading end and a trailing end, the trailing end of the needle being connected to a length of suture, the leading end of the needle being the first end of the needle that will penetrate tissue during a procedure, the needle being backloaded into the first needle guide channel such that the tapered distal end

~~trailing end~~ of the body is closer to the leading end ~~trailing end~~ of the needle than to the trailing end ~~leading end~~ of the needle, the length of suture including a portion that is unsurrounded by the medical device and positioned outside of the body;

the medical device being configured such that the first needle guide channel opening and the second needle guide channel opening will be directly exposed to a patient's tissue when the medical device is used during a procedure.

65. (previously presented) The medical device of claim 64, wherein the first needle guide channel is arcuate shaped.

66. (previously presented) The medical device of claim 64, further comprising a handle coupled to the body.

67. (previously presented) The medical device of claim 66, wherein the handle is coupled to the body by a connector piece.

68. (previously presented) The medical device of claim 67, wherein the connector piece is bendable such that it can be fixed in a variety of positions.

69. (previously presented) The medical device of claim 64, wherein a portion of the body is tapered.

70. (currently amended) A medical device comprising:

a body having a tapered distal end ~~leading end and a trailing end~~, the ~~leading end of the body being the first end of the body that will be inserted into a patient during a~~ procedure;

a lumen extending from a first lumen opening formed in the body to a second lumen opening formed in the body;

a first needle guide channel extending from a first needle guide channel opening formed in the body to a second needle guide channel opening formed in the body; and a needle having a leading end and a trailing end, the trailing end of the needle being connected to a length of suture, the leading end of the needle being the first end of the needle that will penetrate tissue during a procedure, the needle being backloaded into the first needle guide channel such that the tapered distal end trailing-end of the body is closer to the leading end trailing-end of the needle than to the trailing end leading-end of the needle, the length of suture including a portion that is unsurrounded by the medical device and positioned outside of the body, and the length of suture being threaded through the lumen such that the needle will advance out of the first needle guide channel when the length of suture is pulled.

71. (previously presented) The medical device of claim 70, wherein the first needle guide channel is arcuate shaped.
72. (previously presented) The medical device of claim 70, further comprising a handle coupled to the body.
73. (previously presented) The medical device of claim 72, wherein the handle is coupled to the body by a connector piece.
74. (previously presented) The medical device of claim 73, wherein the connector piece is bendable such that it can be fixed in a variety of positions.
75. (previously presented) The medical device of claim 70, wherein a portion of the body is tapered.
76. (previously presented) The medical device of claim 70, further comprising:

one or more additional needle guide channels, each extending from its own first needle guide channel opening formed in the body to its own second needle guide channel opening formed in the body;

wherein each of the one or more additional needle guide channels is configured in operative relation with the lumen such that a needle that is backloaded into any of the one or more additional needle guide channels will be advanced out of the additional needle guide channel by pulling on a length of suture that is connected to the needle and threaded through the lumen.

77. (previously presented) The medical device of claim 76, wherein one of the one or more additional needle guide channels are arcuate shaped.

78. (previously presented) The medical device of claim 76, wherein each of the one or more additional needle guide channels and the first needle guide channel is arcuate shaped.

79. (previously presented) The medical device of claim 76, wherein the first needle guide channel and each of the one or more additional needle guide channels are circumferentially positioned around the body.

80. (previously presented) The medical device of claim 79, wherein the first needle guide channel and each of the one or more additional needle guide channels are equidistant from each other.

81-89. (canceled)

90. (currently amended) A medical device comprising:

a body;

a lumen extending from a first lumen opening formed in the body to a second lumen opening formed in the body;

a first needle guide channel extending from a first needle guide channel opening formed in the body to a second needle guide channel opening formed in the body;

a first needle connected to a first length of suture and backloaded into the first needle guide channel, the first length of suture being threaded through the lumen such that the first needle will be advanced out of the first needle guide channel by pulling on the first length of suture;

a second needle guide channel extending from a third needle guide channel opening formed in the body to a fourth needle guide channel opening formed in the body;

a second needle connected to a second length of suture and backloaded into the second needle guide channel, the second length of suture being separate from the first length of suture, and the second suture being threaded through the lumen such that the second needle will be advanced out of the second needle guide channel by pulling on the second length of suture; and

one or more additional needle guide channels, each extending from its own first needle guide channel opening formed in the body to its own second needle guide channel opening formed in the body;

where the first needle is the only needle backloaded into the first needle guide channel and the second needle is the only needle backloaded into the second needle guide channel;

where each of the one or more additional needle guide channels is configured in operative relation with the lumen such that a needle that is backloaded into any of the one or more additional needle guide channels will be advanced out of the additional

needle guide channel by pulling on a length of suture that is connected to that
needle and threaded through the lumen; and

~~The medical device of claim 87,~~ wherein the first needle guide channel, the second needle guide channel, and each of the one or more additional needle guide channels are circumferentially positioned around the body.

91. (previously presented) The medical device of claim 90, wherein the first needle guide channel, the second needle guide channel, and each of the one or more additional needle guide channels are equidistant from each other.